



County of Custer

Custer County Courthouse
1010 Main
MILES CITY, MONTANA 59301

November 16, 2004

Attn: Mr. Kenneth Blodgett
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Mr. Blodgett,

Re: "Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement" Tongue River Railroad STB
Finance Docket No. 30186 (Sub-No.3)

The Custer County Commissioners strongly support the conclusions of the above referenced Environmental Impact Statement on the Western Alignment of the proposed Tongue River Railroad. We see this amendment as an improvement to the whole project, both from environmental concerns and from rail use concerns. The remediation improvements should set well with the impacted property owners of the Tongue River Valley as they only improve upon the existing approved applications.

The timely completion of the proposed Tongue River Railroad and the development of the Otter Creek Coal Tracts can create an "economic boom" in southeastern Montana that will be felt across the state and throughout our school systems. Coal sales and power generation create many well-paying jobs, provide significant new tax base and should at least stabilize, if not improve upon, our eroding population base. The completion of the Tongue River Railroad opens the door to this potential development bonanza.

Again, the Custer County Commissioners strongly endorse this amendment to the existing environmental impact statements. We thank you for the opportunity to comment upon this action.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Duane Mathison".

Duane Mathison
County Commissioner

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Milo Huber".

Milo Huber
County Commissioner